Chapter—I

Persian and Assam: A review on the background.

(a) Persian: at a glance,

Persian, the more widely used name of a language, is derived from Latin word ‘Persianus’. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term ‘Persian’ seems to have been first used in English in the mid-16th century. In English this language is historically known as ‘Persian’. Some Persian-speaking people continued to use as ‘Farsi’ to identify their language in English and the word gained some currency in the English-speaking countries.

Persian, the term as used by different nations of the world, has a wider significance than what it originally bore. ‘Persia’ or ‘Fars’ is one province out of several in Iran which got political importance since B.C. for which its meaning was extended so as to include the whole people and the country. The adjective form of ‘Fars’ or ‘Pers’ is ‘Farsi’ or ‘Persi’ denotes the official language of Persia and at the same time, the mother tongue of the great majority of its inhabitants and the national language. The Persian language of today is the lineal offspring of the language which Cyrus and Darius spoke and in which the proclamations engraved by their commands on the rocks of Bihistun and Naqsh-e-Rostam and walls and columns of ‘Persipolis’ are drawn up. ‘Persian’ or ‘Parsi’ (Farse-Qadim) was the language of Parsa people who ruled Iran between 550-330 B.C. and belongs to what scholars call the Indo-European group of languages.

1. COD, sixth edition, Oxford University press, New Delhi, Page - 823
It became the language of the Persian empire and was widely spoken in the ancient days ranging from the boarders of India in the east, Russian in the north, the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to Egypt and the Mediterranean in the west.

Over the centuries Parsi has changed to its modern form and today, Persian is spoken primarily in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan and Bahrain and has a status of official language in the first three countries in different names. It was the language of the court of many of the Indian kings till the British banned its use after occupying India in the 18th century. The Mughal kings of India had made Persian their court language. Engraved and filled with gold on the walls of Red Fort in Delhi is the sentence in Persian “Agar Firdows dar jahan ast hamin ast o hamin ast o hamin ast”;—“If there is paradise on earth, it is here it is here it is here”. 3

The term 'Farsi' is encountered in some linguistic literature as a name for the language used both by Iranian and by foreign authors. However, the Academy of Persian language and literature has declared in an official pronouncement that the name ‘Persian’ is more appropriate, as it has the longer tradition in the western languages and better expresses the role of languages as a mark of cultural and national continuity. Even some Persian language scholars have rejected the usage of 'Farsi' in their articles.

There are three modern varieties of standard Persian.

i) Modern Iranian Persian is the variety of Persian spoken in Iran also known as 'Farsi'.

ii) Dari is the local name for the Persian language spoken in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Modern Iranian Persian and Dari are normally written using a modified variant of the Arabic alphabet with different pronunciation and more letters.

iii) Tajik is the variety of Persian language spoken in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia, but unlike the Persian used in Iran and Afghanistan, it is written in the Cyrillic script rather than in Persian script.

The three mentioned varieties are based on the classical Persian literature. There are also local dialects from Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan which slightly differ from standard Persian. Hazaragi, Darwazi and Dehwari are the examples of these dialects.

After the Arab conquest, they forced their inferior script on the people of Iran. In fact, it was the Iranian who for the first time organized and wrote the grammar for the Arabic language and made it usable. Although the Arabic script was not capable of recording the sounds of Parsi language even after addition of additional alphabets not found in Arabic such as PH, CHA, JHA, GH; it became the official script for writing Parsi. Today the Arabic script is used by the Iranian
to write Persian and even the Avesta.4

After the conversion of Persia to Islam, it took approximately 150 years before Persians adopted the Arabic alphabet in place of the older alphabet. Previously, two different alphabet were used-Pahlavi used for middle Persian and the Avestan (Din Dabire) alphabet used for religious purposes.

Persian is a pluricentric language and its grammar is similar to that of many European languages. It has been a medium for literary and scientific contributions to the Islamic world as well as the western. There are many loanwords in the Persian language from Arabic, French, English and Russian. Persian has likewise influenced the vocabularies of other languages especially other Indo-Iranian language like Hindi, Urdu, etc as well as Turkish languages like Turkish, Turkmen, Azeri and Uzbek, Afro-Asiatic languages like Assyrian and Arabic and even Dravidian languages like Telugu etc. Several languages of southwest Asia have also been influenced, including Armenian and Georgian. Persian has even influenced Malay spoken in Malaysia and Swahili spoken in Africa. Many Persian words have also found their way into other Indo-European languages including English.5

Persian has an influence on certain neighboring languages, particularly the Turkic language of Central Asia, Caucasus, Pashto, Kurdish and Anatolia, the development of the Urdu language as well as a smaller influence on Hindi, Punjabi and other South Asian languages, while having a lesser influence on Arabic, the languages of Mesopotamia, and its core vocabulary being of middle Persian origin. New Persian contains a considerable amount of Arabic lexical items which were Persianized and often took a different

meaning and usage than the Arabic original. The Arabic vocabulary in other Iranic language are generally understood to have been borrowed from new Persian.  

As the Persian language undergone great changes, so the known history of Persian language can be divided into the following distinct categories.

(a) Old Persian:—Old Persian evolved from Proto-Iranian as it evolved in the southwest Iran. The earliest dateable example of the language is the Bihistun Inscription of the Achaemenid Darius-I. (522 B.C.-486 B.C.). Old Persian was written in old Cuneiform, a script unique to that language and is generally assumed to be the invention of Darius’s reign. Old Persian is the most commonly attested language of the Achaemenid age. While examples of Old Persian have been found wherever the Achaemenid held territories, the language is attested primarily in the inscriptions of Western Iran particularly in Persia in the southwest, the homeland of the tribes that the Achaemenids came from. In contrast to the later Persian, the written Old Persian had an extensively inflected grammar.

(b) Middle Persian:—Unlike Old Persian the spoken and written forms of which must have been dramatically different from one another, written Middle Persian reflected oral use and was thus much simpler than its ancestor. The complex conjugation and declension of Old Persian yielded to a simple internal structure of Middle Persian; the dual number disappeared leaving only singular and plural as did gender.

Although the middle Persian of Iranian language formally begins with the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, the transition from old to Middle Persian had probably begun from the 4th century. However, Middle Persian is not actually attested until 600 years

later when it appears in Sassanid era inscription, so any form of the language before this date cannot be described with any degree of certainty and from the 8th century onwards Middle Persian gradually began yielding to New Persian, with the middle Persian form only continuing in the texts of Zoroastrian traditions.

(c) New Persian:— The history of New Persian itself span more than one thousand years. The development of the language in its last period is often considered in three stages of early, classical and contemporary periods. The fact that almost all current native speaker of the language do understand ancient texts of Persian language and the grammatical differences of ancient language is acquainted by speaker of today simply by reading and memorizing. How it originated is not so clear, only words have their roots in different languages spoken in various parts of the country, but the majority of the words have their roots in Old Persian, Pahlavi and Avesta. They are represented in classical writings and poems. New Persian is widely known as Classical Persian language.

The Islamic conquest of Persia marks the beginning of the new history of Persian language and literature. It saw world-notable poets and for a long the lingua franca of the eastern parts of Islamic world and of the Indian subcontinent. It was also the official and cultural language of many Islamic dynasties including Samanids, Buyids, Tahirids, Zyarids, Taimurids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Safavids, Qacharids, Ottomans, Mughals and others. The heavy influence of Persian on other language can still be witnessed across the Islamic world and is still appreciated as a literary and prestigious language among the educated elites especially in the field of music and arts.
(d) Modern Persian: Modern Persian language as spoken today consists of a lot of words of non-Iranian origin. Some modern technical terms have been incorporated from English, Russian, French and German and are recognized but Arabic has corrupted a major part of the language by replacing the original Persian connotations. For technical Persian vocabulary, the Iranian National Academy of Persian language and literature is responsible for evaluating these new words in order to initiate and introduce their Persian equivalents.  

Persian is one of the sweetest and richest languages of the world and a very important member of the Indo-European family of languages. It has a recorded history of more than 2500 years and is a language spoken by one of the old civilized nations of the world is one of the most cherished treasure of human legacy.

It is a long record of the evolution of human speech; its rich literature is the most valuable embodiment of the advancement of human intellect. It is undoubtedly one of the oldest living languages of the world especially of Asia and no history of the intellectuals and cultural evolution of humanity of Asia and parts of Europe can be well understood without the proper and deeper study of the development of Persian language.

The influence of Persian introduced to India with the Islamic empires established in the country specially with the Delhi Sultanate from the 13th century and in the 16th to 19th century during the Mughul rule.

(7) http://en.wikipedia.org - the free encyclopedia.

Persian was the official language of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire and their successor states and the cultural language of poetry and literature. Many of the Sultans of Delhi and their nobility in the Sultanate period were persianized Turks from central Asia who speak Turkic as their mother tongues.

The Mughals were also from persianized Central Asia and spoke Chagatai Turk at the beginning before eventually adopting Persian. For five centuries prior to the British colonization, Persian was widely used as a second language in the Indian subcontinent. It took prominence as the language of culture and education in several Muslim courts in South Asia and became the official language under the Delhi sultanate and the Mughal emperors. Starting from the year 1843 A.D., English gradually replaced Persian and reduced its importance in the subcontinent. Evidence of Persian influence on history and literature can be seen in the extent of its influence on the languages of the Indian subcontinent and the popularity that Persian literature still enjoys in that region. 9

(b) Assam in brief,

Assam is the frontier province of Indian Union in the north-east. Its boundaries lie in between latitudes 28°18' and 24°18' North and longitudes 89°46' and 97°46' East. It contains at present an area of 54,000 square miles of which a little over 24,000 square miles constitute the plains having the monsoon weather and sufficient rain fall.

Assam, a land full of natural resources and beauties which existed in ancient time, got the name not very old. It adopted different name in different times during its journey through history. Once it was Pragijotishpur which became Kamrup in early period of history and now Assam derived from the word 'Asom' means uneven because of its hilly and uneven rough land or because of it is inhabited by Ahoms. In the Hindu epics and in Pauranik and Tantrik literature there are numerous references to ancient Assam, which is known as pragjyotisha in the Mahabharata and as Kamrup in Purans and Tantras. Its extent varied from time to time and in many Hindu epics the description of its extent is not exact the same. 10

According to some works based on Hindu religious source, the country was divided in to four portions, viz.Kampith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bharali, and Saumarpith from the Bharali to the Dikrang.

(10) Dutta, Mr. Debabrata- Assamer Itihas, Silchar, Assam. Page no - 19
Elsewhere Ratnapith is said to include the track between the Karatoya and the Manash, Kampith that between the Manash and Silghat on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and Bhadrapith, the corresponding portion of the south bank, while Saumarpith as before, is the most easterly track.  

Walled off on all sides except the north west by impenetrable mountains of the south-eastern Himalayan off shoots, Assam or Kamrup was enjoying a separate identity of independence at the time of first known Muslim contact. The country gradually slopes away along the course of the Brahmaputra to the north-west and finally shades off into the valley of the Karatoya. The river Karatoya formed the traditional western frontier of the country. During the middle part of the 13th century, the country of Assam was seen divided into four independent states viz. the Chutia state, the Kachari state, the state of Barbhuiyans and the Kamatapuri state. The chutias were ruling east of the Subansiri and the Dihang with the exception of a strip of the south and south-east. The Kacharis ruled on the south bank of the Brahmaputra which probably extended at least half way across the present Nagoan district. West of the Kacharis on the south bank and of the Chutias on the north, there was an independent state ruled by Barbhuiyans. They were a number of twelve pretty chiefs called Bhuiyans. In the western part of the Brahmaputra valley, there was a state called Kamata or Kamrupa whose western boundary was the Karatoya. In the mean period a small state was


state was established in the eastern part of Assam by the people known as Ahom, an original of Tai race of the 'Shan' community from Burma. But they were not counted until the 15th century A.D.

At the last part of the 15th century A.D., the Muslim rulers of Bengal conquered Kamatapur or Kamrup, but could not retain a permanent hold there. There developed a rise of several small independent mutually hostile and quarrelling tribal principalities each under their respective chiefs. These were extinguished by the new Koch power, the most energetic power which came into existence by insurgence of a Koch leader Bishu later known as Bishwa Singh. The Koch could gradually establish a vast kingdom in Assam up to the dominion of the Ahoms in far east. The most notable rulers of the Koch were Naranarayan and Hilary. The Koch kingdom ended in the 1st part of the 17th century A.D. being weak and split.

After the fall of the Koch dynasty, the whole of the country of Assam came under the full control of the Ahoms. The Ahoms were the offshoots of the great 'Tai' of the 'Shan' race from Burma (Myanmar). The penetration of the 'Tai' into Brahmaputra valley is believed to have occurred as early as in the eight century A.D. But the advance of the Tais under Sukapha to the Brahmaputra valley is a historical fact and occurred in the 13th century A.D. Sukapha advanced into the Brahmaputra valley in the year 1229 A.D. and laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom here adopting Charaideo as his capital. The monarch, Sukapha passed in the year 1268 A.D. after laying the foundation of a great kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley on a strong basis which lasted without break for six centuries. It was bounded by the Buri Dihing, the Brahmaputra, the Dikhow and the Naga hills, at present parts
present parts of the district of Dibrugarh and Sibsagar. The political history from the death of Sukapha to the accession of Suhummong (1497-1539) is not of considerable importance. The earliest and most extensive expansion of the kingdom was effected during the reign of Suhummong. The Ahom power had not only been consolidated, but also attained its full growth both in terms of population and resources.

The expansion of Ahom kingdom had started in the year 1512 A.D. with a successful expedition into Panbari in the Habung country on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The kingdom was in constant increase up to the rule of their last rulers. The Ahoms ruled Assam for more than six successive centuries showing their full vigor and splendor. They gradually annexed all the neighboring countries within their territories from every direction. The whole of Assam gradually came under their control by and large except the Kacharies and Jayantias in their own territory. The British came here and annexed Assam into their own administration in the year 1826 A.D. as they annexed the Kachari and Jayantia kingdom in the year 1834 A.D. and 1835 A.D. respectively. Since the time Assam was under full administrative control of the British rule till 15th August 1947 A.D. when it attained independence. It is still a federal province under the union of India.

(c) How Persian entered into Assam,

Entrance of Persian in Assam physically took place in the year 1206 A.D. with Mohammed bin Bakhtiyar, who wanted to conquer Tibet through Assam. Because the invaders towards Assam since 13th century A.D. till the expeditions of Mir Jumla, were Persian Muslims from central Asia having Turkish as their mother tongue and Persian as culture and as means of their communications with others. As they were accompanied by soldiers, officials and religious clergymen, the majority of whom were Persian speaking peoples, so it is quite natural that Persian entered in Assam through them. Bakhtiar, with grand army of 10000 well-equipped cavalry started for expedition of Assam under the guidance of newly converted Mech chief, Ali and advanced towards north east along the right bank of the river Karatoya, the boundary between the Muslim country Gauda and Kamrup through a region inhabited by the tribal peoples. Without crossing the river, the army moved for ten days along its upward course up to the mountain. At last they reached to a place where there is a giant stone bridge which is identified as Silsako over the river Baranadi in Assam Valley. As soon as the invading army crossed that river bridge and entered the territory of the king of Kamrup, the latter immediately sent his diplomatic emissaries to Mohammed bin Bakhtiar, with a friendly counsels relating to that he should postpone the march towards Tibet that year to make ample preparation to proceed the next year and the Raja of Kamrup would join the army of Mohammed bin Bakhtiar in this expedition. But the arrogant Turkish leader did not pay heed to this counsels marched on to Tibet through Kamrup. On the sixteenth day, he emerged in a open well cultivated plains of
lower Tibet with a strong fortress inhabited by tribal people in populous villages. The invader immediately resorted acts of plundering the villages and they could advance quickly with ease.\textsuperscript{14}

But soon the hardy tribal people joined together and attacked the Mohammaden army. They gave vent to their anger either by killing or imprisoning many Muslims in a day long skirmish. But the following days were much disastrous that could be suspected to the army of Mohammed bin Bakhtiar. The road in the rear of the invaders was blocked. They could not obtain a pound of food or a blade of grass for their animals. Even a stick of firewood was not left out for them.\textsuperscript{15} Their miseries increased ever more when the forces of the Raja of Kamrup hurled at them by attacking or slaughtering on road. In this expedition Mohammed bin Bakhtiar could save himself and a few numbers of his soldiers and a large numbers of his soldiers were became captives in hands of the Assamese rulers. This futile expedition of Mohammed Bin Bakhtiar marked the beginning of the Muslims settlement in Assam and Persian, the language spoken by these Muslims captive people, came for first time in contact with Assam and its people.

The second Muslim expedition in Assam was carried out by Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz Khalji of Gaur in the year 1226-27 A.D and a fringe of Kamrup, but Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz

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15. Ibid, page-39
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advanced from Mymansing side along the river Brahmaputra up to Sadiya but routed out and driven back, though there is prolonged controversy over their advancement. The invasion of Bakhtiar touched only first invaded Kamrup directly. But he could not progress much and had to retreat in haste. This Iwaz was overthrown by Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish of Delhi in the year 1227 AD. Nasiruddin ruled Bengal as viceroy of his father and sought to annex the neighboring kingdom and advanced to Kamrup after killing its ruler Prithu. In this expedition, a large number of Muslim soldiers became captive of the rulers of Assam and hence Assam could come in contract with Persian language better than before because here the Muslim invaders could go far interior places of Assam.

The next Mohammedan expedition towards Assam which took place in the year 1256-57 AD by Sultan Ikhtiaruddin Yuzbek Tughril khan was the first serious efforts to conquer Kamrup by Persian Muslim. Tughril khan, a powerful ruler of exceptional ability assumed sovereign status in Bengal with three feathers already in his hands Lakhnauti, Bihar and Oudh and planned to have a fourth namely Kamrup. The land of Kamrup was bounded by the Karatoya on the west and the Baranadi on the east and by the submountane Himalayas on the north and northern part of modern Mymensing on the south which, broadly speaking included the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara, Koch Bihar, Jalpaiguri, Rongpur and some parts of Mymensing. From the accounts of Minhazuddin Siraj it is clear that this invasion of Malik Yuzbak Tughril Khan was inspired more by the desire of spreading Islamic faith and also by the lure for the fabulous treasures kept buried in some places of this country by Gastasib,

a Persian conqueror rather than for more military achievement and territorial expansion. From among those, a twelve hundreds hoards of treasures except one, fell in the hands Mohammedan army. So, the Sultan when free from other troubles started from Lakhnauti at the beginning of the spring of 1257 A.D. with a strong army crossed the river Karatoya and entered Kamrup along the north bank of the Brahmaputra via Rangamati above Dhubri and reached Guwahati in the year 1257 A.D. The Raja of Kamrup beat a strategic retreat to the northern sub-montane jungles without any struggle, damming the hill streams in order to flood the land below so as to balk his persuit by the invader. To entice the invader into the interior he allowed his subjects to submit to the latter and to return home. Thus having encouraged the Sultan advanced to the area of the Bar Nadi, collecting huge spoils of victory and desirous of permanent occupation of such a rich and prosperous land. He constructed a mosque at the capital to spread Islam and had the “khutbah’ read and the Friday religious services were instituted and the signs of the people of Islam appeared there. The Raja of Kamrup negotiated for his evacuation by offering to pay annual tributes in gold and elephants from the wilds of Kamrup and promised that he would continue the “khutbah unchanged and Muslim stamped coins as established. The Sultan rejected these terms. But being unfamiliar with the conditions of the land, he failed to build up reserve stocks of grains for his soldiers and fodder for his animals.

19. Ibid.
The available stocks were bought by merchants in disguise or removed far off places. But the Sultan could not tide over the impediments offered by the climate and configuration of the land. As the spring rains flooded the country, the Raja took refuge in hills and following the local defensive guerilla tactics, cut the water dykes open, flooding the land submerging the spring harvest. As pre-arranged, the people threw off the yoke of Muslim rule, reoccupied the plains and waterways and blocked the transport provisions towards the capital. The invaders faced serious death situation due to starvation and diseases. Retreat was the only remedy left for them that too be very quickly. With the help of local guide the Sultan sought to follow the shorter route through the sub-montage track via Koch Bihar towards Devkot. After some advance though the jungle defiles, the invaders were surrounded by the Assam soldiers from every sides. Finally the Sultan and his armies were routed out in an open encounter in a narrow mountainous defile. In this encounter an arrowshot wounded the elephant borne Sultan in the chest. The Rajah of Kamrup allowed the captured Sultan to see his son before being killed. His other family members and dependants were imprisoned and only a handful could to the Bengal capital.  

These first three Turko-Afgan Mohammedan invasions towards Kamrup or Assam have elaborately been narrated by Minhajuddin Siraj, a judge of the time who never been indulged in high flown eulogy, in his famous Persian chronicle ‘Tabqat-e- Nasiri’. The author completed his work in the year 1260-61 A.D. and dedicated it in the name of Sultan Nasiruddin.

Mahmood. His straightforward manner of narrating the events induces confidence in sincerity of his statement and accuracy of knowledge. The invaders of these expeditions were mainly Muslims of Persian origin and they and their soldiers and officers used Persian in their speeches and official correspondence. Hence the people of Assam came for the first time in contact with Persian language and culture specially those who embraced Islam.

Another invasion towards Assam by Mohammedan happened in the year 1321-22 A.D. was led by Sultan Ghiasuddin Bahadur Shah. The famous Malfuzat of Hazrat Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Muneri refers to Sultan as governor of Assam, though no other source indicates in this regards and also some numismatic evidence proves it. Sultan Ghiasuddin Bahadur shah, the ruler of Sonargoan, planned to attack Kamrup and further to penetrate into the Brahmaputra valley. Leaving Sonergoan in the year 1321-22 A.D., the sultan moved up the old course of the Brahmaputra to the south-eastern frontier of Kamrup and without getting any resistance he at last reached Nagoan of modern Assam where the Kacharies were ruling. But his invasion had no permanent results as he was soon defeated and killed by Mohammed Tuglaq in the year 1327-28 A.D. 21

Expedition towards Assam from Muslim Bengal, is a process of successive political Endeavour done in frequent. The 14th century A.D. witnessed occasions of several expeditions in this regards. The next was by Sultan shamsuddin Illias Shah, the founder of the Illias shahi in the year 1342 A.D. and his son Sikandar shah who were able, energetic, and ambitious ruler with imperialistic aggressions in different directions to their credits.

When studied with numismatic and epigraphic evidence, it is seemed that Sultan Illias Shah invaded Kamrup in about the year 1356-57 A.D., being encouraged by some favourable circumstances. Illias shah must have made considerable progress in the conquest and occupation of the city of Kamrup before his death in the year 1357 A.D. and his work was brought to its finale by his son and successor Sikandar Shah. A coin of 1357-59 A.D., issued by Sikandar Shah evidently to signalize his victory with the mint-name "Chawlistan urf Kamrup or arsat Kamrup'. The next invasion towards Assam done by Sultan Ghiasuddin Abul Muzaffar Azam Shah, the successor of Sikandar Shah in the year 1389 A.D. which is supported by a coin discovered in Guwahati and a stone inscription in Rani area, about twenty miles west of Guwahati. The Sultan had more than one expedition between 1393-1410 A.D. towards Assam during his tenure. The year 1460 A.D. marked a successful invasion of Kamrup by Shah Ismail Ghazi. Ismail ghazi was a saint general of the Sultan Turbak Shah of Bengal. This event took place forty years earlier to the major Muslim expedition towards Assam by Alauddin Hussain Shah. The numismatic evidence indicates the fact through a set of coins issued by Sultan Hussain Shah in the year 1493 A.D. having described himself as the conqueror of Kamrup. The same epithet was inscribed in another set of coins issued in the year 1502 A.D. which shows that this Sultan of Gauda conquered Kamrup and Kamata immediately after his accession, but in any case, his conquest must have been earlier to the issue of this coins. Though not supported by clear evidence from any reliable source, but authenticated by some Persian sources.

22. Barpujari Dr. H.k., The comprehensive History of Assam, Guwahati 2007, page 43.
referring to it nearly of 160 years late 'Fatheyya -e-Ibria' of Shahabuddin Talish ,a reporter of Mir Jumla and 'Alamghir Namah', the official history of Aurangzeb and the 300 hundreds years later history of Bengal 'Riaz-us-Salatin'.

Hussain shah’s invasion towards Assam might have occurred at a time about the second decade of the sixteenth century. After an initially success, the Sultan left his son to effect the subjugation of these and went back to Bengal. Unable to resist the invasion at first the king of Assam withdrew to the hills evacuating the plans to be occupied by the invaders. With the onset of rains the Rajah came down with his followers, closed the roads, intercepted the supplies and surprised captured or killed the invaders including the Sultans son. The memories of this ill-fated expedition were so bitter that Hussain shah did not seek to intricate his honour in that land of witchcraft and magic.

Mohammedan invasion towards Assam after Sultan Hussain Shah, in the early part of 16th century A.D., was a lull for some years in Ahom-Muslim conflicts. Hussain shah’s son and successor Nusrat Shah was a able king, but could not turn towards Assam affairs for a long time because of his preoccupation with other affairs. In the meantime, the Ahoms came down the Brahmaputra unopposed against the Muslim base at Hajo and established a military base at Narayanpur on the north bank.

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24. Ibid,-page 133.
The boundary disputes between the two powerful rule the Mughals and Ahoms was a permanent feature in those days which became complicated on account of economic and commercial objectives. As Assam was full of natural resources so the commercial objectives included ivory, aloe wood, pepper, tobacco, cereals etc. At a time a Mughal trader was detected by Ahom guard for unauthorized collections of aloe wood, who could escape but his two other persons were put to death by the Ahom officials. The Ahom though justly sought to punish the guilty of territorial trespassers and illegal traders, the Mughals launched a war of retributions against them.

The Mughal viceroy selected his most trusty officer, Syed Abū Bakar as commander of the expeditionary force with huge war weapons and sent to Assam. He started advancing up the Brahmaputra in rainy season of the year 1615 A.D. and reached Barnagar, the old capital of Kamrup. He next proceeded to Hajo, the new headquarter. About mid-November 1615 A.D. the Mughal general started war by a sudden assault on Kajali fort, commanding a strategic site at the junction of the Brahmaputra and the Kalang. The Ahom defenders with war boats were evidently taken by surprise worsted after a short skirmish and took to flight leaving their boats. The capture of Kajali fort was followed by several plundering raids into interior of Assam. The Ahoms made all out efforts to arrest these. To check further advance of the Mughals, the defenses of Samdhara fort on the bank of the Bharali and the Brahmaputra were

28 Barpujari Dr. H.K. The Comprehensive History of Assam, voll-ii Guwahati, 2007, page 49
strengthened with additional stockades and chief officials. The Mughal had advanced and encamped on the right bank of the Bharali opposite of Samdhara. After a month they captured the Ahom stockades on the left bank killing many Ahom defenders and compelling the rest to retreat to Samdhara fort.

After failing in first two round of war, the Ahom king redoubled his strength and efforts. He secretly collected the various weaknesses of the Mughals and the ways of sudden attacks through their spies. Towards the end of a wintry night in the middle of January 1616 A.D., the Ahoms attacked the negligent Mughals by surprise. They stormed the Mughal camp, destroyed their arsenal and captured the artillery and elephants. The Mughal up routed and their commander, when tried to escape was killed. The imperial fleet was so demoralized by this that they came to be soon worsted with the capture of entire fleet and their crews. Even when the Mughal reinforcement had come under Sayed Hakim and Sayed Kasu, Jamal Khan and others, all were in vain and were killed and the remaining rest were surrendered.

The Mughal offensive in Assam was disastrous which was due to Abu Bakar's military incompetence and personal defects. 'The losses in men and materials were colossal' and the more was the moral loss in military prestige and political power. On the other the Ahom gained what the Mughals lost.

The victory of the Ahoms in the year 1616 A.D. prevented the Mughals from their imperialistic policy of expansion towards Assam and caused the anti-Mughal force in Kamrup encouraged and the moral prestige of the Ahoms raised. As a result, an unofficial cold war from the part of the Ahoms in Kamrup was running which lasted from 1616 A.D. to 1620 A.D.

In the year 1636 A.D. open war resumed between the Mughals and the Ahoms after an interval of twenty one years. This resumption of open war subjected to various factors accounted for bilateral political and criminal activities. The Ahom king Pratap Singha was very haughty and arrogant who continued to violate diplomatic relations. In March 1636 A.D. Raja Balinayaran attacked Uttarkul crossing the river Baranadi and captured the Mughal outpost Nowmati. Reinforcement from Bengal arrived on the appeal made by Abdus Salam, the Governor of Kamrup but they could not even capture the Mughal fugitive officer Harikesh of Nowmati. The Mughal could not resist and lost some of their outposts and withdrew to Uttarkul by crossing the river Brahmaputra. In the Uttakul, the Ahoms won repeated success against the Mughals where their commander Farid Khan was killed.

After arrival of heavy reinforcement the Mughals advanced towards Pandu under their commander Mohammed Salih where a strong fight took place. As a result the Ahoms were defeated and retreated. But when the news of defeat reached to Raja Pratap Singha, he dispatched a strong reinforcement on land and water.

The Ahom army took the Mughal fleet at Srighat by surprise and killing their general Mohammed Muslih captured their weapons and seized Sualkuchi. After Sualkuchi the Ahom captured Hajo, the capital of Kamrup and imprisoned their Governor Abdus Salam and killing other officials gathered immense booty. The seize of Hajo was the supreme achievement of the Ahoms. In Uttarkul the Ahoms captured the principal Mughal strongholds of Srighat and Hajo and their surrounding outpost. Hence the Ahoms established their sovereignty in most parts of Kamrup. But in the second phase of war which outbreak in the year 1637 A.D. after arrival of a new and strong reinforcement from the part of Bengal viceroy under his brother Mir Zainuddin who was assisted by Allah Yar Khan, the Mughals recovered their lost hold in Kamrup.

In 1638 A.D. a fresh war arose between the Ahoms and the Mughals in Duimunsila where the Ahoms fought bravely under their commander Mumai Tamuli and seized some parts of Kamrup from the Mughals and annexed under their territory. The Ahoms victory at Duimunsila was a matter of grave concern for the Mughals. Hence the fauzdar of Kamrup, Allah Yar Khan became very eager for a specific settlement with the Ahoms through a treaty. Than after a treaty was signed between the Mughals and the Ahoms which was signed early in February 1639 A.D. and was historically known as ‘Asurar Ali treaty’.31

In this treaty each side agreed to accept the territorial integrity of the other in respective dominions. The river Barnadi in Uttarkul and the causeway (Ali) of Asur in Dakshinkul

became the boundaries of Mughal Kamrup and Assam on both sides of the Brahmaputra. The
king of Assam for the first time recognized Mughal supremacy in Kamrup and agreed not to
interfere.  

From the year 1639 A.D. up to the year 1658 A.D., a cold war continued between the
Ahoms and the Mughals for various prevailing bilateral issues. Allah Yar Khan was the fuazder
of Kamrup and Jayadhwaj Singha was the Ahoms king.

The point of diplomatic disputes between the Ahoms and the Mughals were as follows:-

1) Commercial intercourse.
2) Khedah operation to catch wild elephants.
3) Boundary disputes.
4) Extradition of Political defenders.
5) Violation of personal freedom of subjects.

The ever important expedition done towards Assam on the part of the Mughal is the
expedition of Mir Jumla. During the seventeenth century western part of Assam belonging to the
Koches became the bone of contention between the Ahoms and the Mughals. The Mughal centre
faced a disorder following illness of the Emperor Shahjahan in the year 1657 A.D. and their
governor in Bengal Prince Shuja left his entire naval and land forces which forwarded a
favorable opportunity to the Koch and the Ahoms to attack the Mughals Kamrup.

There happened an alliance among the Koches and the Ahoms and attacked the boundary of Mughal Kamrup as fixed by the treaty of the Asusar Ali (1539). As a result, the fauzdar of Kamrup Mir Luthfullah Shiraji fled in great alarm during night to Jahangir Nagar in the year 1659 A.D. leaving everything of Guwahati, Pandu and Sharaighat to Ahoms.

Getting no obstacles from any direction, the Ahoms captured the entire lower Assam including the Mughal Kamrup after a short skirmish with the local principalities and extended their dominion up to Bengal border.

After the conquest of Bengal from Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb appointed his faithful and able General Mir Jumla as Governor of Bengal in the year 1660 A.D. and expressed his hope in a letter to him to conquer Assam soon. After a suitable arrangement of his administration in Bengal, Mir Jumla determined to strike first against Assam for reasons mentioned below;

(1) To establish the lost imperial prestige in Assam,

(2) To save imperial dominion,

(3) To get Muslim captives in Assam back,

(4) To use Assam as safe Passage for conquering Burma and China.

Accompanied by Dilir Khan, Mir started in Nov. 1661 A.D. with a strong army and powerful artillery and huge weapons to capture Assam to show that his imperial army was irresistible in water and land. At the first step Mir entered Koch Bihar unopposed in the end of the same year and recaptured it and annexed in the imperial territory. He halted here for some days and after some reformative works in the administration done here marched forward keeping Koch Bihar under a fauzder.
Mir Jumla did not receive any reply to his peace offer even after his conquer of Koch Bihar. So he continued his difficult march towards Assam in January 1662 A.D. through the jungle route and joined Rashid Khan at Rangamati and demanded from the Ahoms king Jayadhwaj to surrender the imperial territory from Guwahati to Hatisala. But the Ahom king refused. Now the General assisted by Jamal Khan and Monuwvar Khan and others started forwarding upwards following the course of the Brahmaputra overcoming the difficulties presented by nature and men in the unknown land. No opposition worth mentioning came from the Ahoms and Mir reached Saraighat in 1662 A.D. The Ahom saved themselves by a hurried night flight up the river Kajali. After demolition of Saraighat forte, Mir Jumla occupied Guwahati, the capital of Kamrup and Pandu as well.

Mir facing no effort from the Ahoms even in Guwahati started invasion in Assam. He set up thanas in different places including Guwahati to safeguard communications and took due precaution against Ahoms night attacks. As the Ahoms capital was located on south bank of the Brahmaputra, so he crossed the river half way from Guwahati and advanced towards Simalugarh. There happened a sever war and strong fight took place between Mir Jumla's army and the Ahoms chieftains in which Mir became victorious over Ahom in the year 1662 A.D. and the Simalugarh forte was fallen to the Mughal. The Ahoms became so frightened that they easily evacuated Samdhara and Kaliabar and left them to Mughal. Mir left Kaliabar and advanced


34. Ibid, page 175.
advanced forward and facing different obstacles as possible from the part of the Ahoms reached at last at the Ahoms capital Garhgoan in March 1662. The Ahom king Jayadhwaj escaped from Garhgoan and took shelter in the hills leaving everything in his capital. A huge amount of weapons including all of its kind and innumerable wealth including gold and silver reached in the hand of Mir Jumla in this victory of battle with the Ahoms After conquering Garhgoan and its nearest forte Mathurapur, Mir Jumla wanted to establish here a permanent rule of the Mughal. 'A mint was established here to strike coins in the name of Aurangzeb' and various administrative and military reformative works were done. The whole of the upper Assam region was divided into many divisions and thanas, outposts were established in order to guard the capital and protect from the sudden attack of the Ahoms especially the night attack. But Mir Jumla faced many incessant guerilla operations from Assamese people especially in the rainy seasons. It was because of the fact that he could not subjugate the mind of Assamese people; even he could not capture their king for which he had to endure such miseries. One out of many causes of their hatred was that they saw the graves of their earlier king were dug out in the name of hidden treasury.

When the rainy season burst out with its full fury, water filled up the entire plain area having the imperial garrison and outposts fallen in water and mud and all the imperial men and army confined to a state of natural seize. The Mughals faced the state of virtual starvation in their isolated situation due to cut off their inter-camp communications and supply of provisions.

Again a severe misfortune visited the imperial camp because of a pestilence broke out there and lessened a large number of their men. Mir Jumla, therefore, withdrew his men from different garrison and outposts to his enclosures in Garhgoan. The problem of holding up or retreating became equally difficult. This condition continued till the end of the rainy season.\textsuperscript{36}

When the rain ceased and flood water subsided and the route became clear, Mir Jumla prepared for an attack. But it could not be materialized because of long sufferings of his men and his fast deteriorating condition of health. He was compelled to prepare for early return from that country. In the meantime, the Ahom king sent for a peace treaty to Mir Jumla who immediately accepted it on his part. A treaty was accomplished between the Ahoms and the Mughals in the year 1663 A.D. which is known as the Treaty of Ghilajari ghat. According to this treaty the Ahoms accepted the vassalage of the Mughal emperor and agreed to pay a huge presentations and a heavy annual tributes. The Ahom king ceded Kamrup and Darrang to the imperial loyalty.

Soon after the treaty Mir Jumla gave orders for joyful return march from this country. He started retreating on 10\textsuperscript{th} January 1663 and reached at Pandu and Guwahati where he made a suitable arrangement of his administration appointing Rashid Khan as its faujder.\textsuperscript{37} Then he started sailing downwards on boats with ailing condition where he died four miles above Khizrpur in 1663 A.D.

\textsuperscript{36} Salkia, Dr. Mohini Kumar- Assam Muslim relation and its cultural significance, Luit press, Golaghat, page 120.

\textsuperscript{37} Barpujari, Dr. H.K. —The Comprehensive History of Assam, Guwahati-2007, page-198
After the departure of Mir Jumla in February 1663 A.D., the Ahom king Jayadhwaj Singh, came down from his Namrup retreat. Fixing his headquarter at Bakata, five miles distant from the ruined capital of Garhgoan, he set himself to rehabilitate his country. But soon he died sonless in November 1663. His uncle's son Chakradhwaj Singh was installed in the throne who followed 'the objective of retrieving national honour through a program of all round recovery behind a policy of outward show of subordination without an open rapture with the Mughals'.

The Ahoms were to pay war indemnity in elephants and cash and to cede certain territories to Mughals. But the king Chakradhwaj was against any payment at all and was in search of getting out from the vassalage of the Mughals. That is why the king after rehabilitation of his man power and necessary social stability, started to show disloyalty to the Mughals. He at first sought to secure the co-operations of the rulers of the neighboring territories in an eventual resumption of war with Mughals. Hostilities took place between the Ahoms and the Mughals due to breaking of the accords rule by both sides. Raja Chakradhwaj made war preparations in both land and water alike because of the stern approach of Rashid Khan, the fauzder of Guwahati, when insisted on the prompt payment of war indemnity.

38. Barpujari, Dr., H. K. -The Comprehensive History of Assam voll-i Guwahati-2007  

page 198

39. Ibid

40. Ibid page 201.
The famous Ahom general Lachit Barphukan was entrusted the reign of army who started advancing towards Guwahati in August 1667 A.D. As Lachit was advancing towards Guwahati annexing the Mughal territories and destroying the Mughal outposts, the Mughal fauzder, Syed Firoz Khan fled towards Manah with some of his followers leaving it to the Ahoms. 'The victory of Guwahati war by Lachit and the recovery of Kamruo up to the Manah was a momentum chapter in the Ahom-Mughal relation.' The Ahoms also resumed hostilities in order to drive the Mughals farther west of the Manah river.

Learning the loss of Kamrup in December 1667 A.D., Aurangzeb decided at once to retrieve imperial prestige and regain lost dominion and to chastise the Ahoms who had shown their audacity in the frontier. 'He commissioned Ram Singh of Amber to lead an invasion to Assam' as commander of imperial force of expedition. Ram Singh advanced through Khuntaghat and reached Rangamati, the frontier garrison town only in February 1669 A.D. Then he started cautiously from his base Rangamati still he reached at Sualkuchi. The deputation of Ram Singh marked a new phase in Ahom-Mughal relation. Unlike Assam's previous offensive war of the recovery, the present was essentially a defensive war to retain possession of recovered territory of Kamrup.

At the initial stage of advancement, Ram Singh attained success in capturing some forte and proceeded up to Hajo and occupied it. But Ram Singh could not occupy Guwahati because

42. Ibid page 211.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid, page 212
of heavy fortification erected by the Ahoms there. Ram Singh as part of diplomatic mission forwarded peace proposal to the Ahoms to surrender the captured territories of the imperial dominion. But this was over ruled by the Ahoms and prepared for defence. Now Ram Singh had no alternative except to march forward to capture Guwahati, but he could not become all-round successful in this battle.

Though 'the reports of Ram Singh’s repeated failure reached to the emperor in Delhi' through the accounts of the province of Bengal sent by Jaffar Khan, the wazir, the Emperor appreciated the honest endeavor of Ram Singh and forwarded some newly reinforcement to Assam. After the rain and arrival of new reinforcement, Ram Singh resumed his war activities but these proved to be futile because the Ahoms defended sternly. Ram Singh repeatedly tried to get the Ahoms in a negotiable settlement through his peace mission, but in vain. The last effort to capture Guwahati ended in smoke at the Saraighat battle when they faced a complete defeat to the Ahoms. The Mughals suffered heavy causalities; it was not merely a defeat but was a disaster. Henceforth the Mughals faced repeatedly defeat in the subsequent battles with the Ahoms, even their General Ram Singh retreated and left Kamrup and returned to Rangamati.

The report of Mughals defeat in the Guwahati war enraged the emperor who at once ordered for demotion of general Ram Singh and ordered for his recall. Accordingly Ram Singh made over charge to Abu Nisar Khan and met the Emperor in the year 1676 A.D.


46. Ibid page 227.
Since the death of the Ahom King Chakradhwaj Singha and removal of the Mughal General Ram Singh from Assam, there was chaos and disturbances prevailing in this country. No stable government could be installed because of internal conflict and disorder among the royal inheritors and ministers. Misunderstandings developed among the different groups of leaders. The defense of Guwahati was held by Laluk Sola Barphukan who was substituted in place of Lachit Barphukan after his death. In the mean time, Aurangzeb had appointed Prince ‘Azam as Viceroy of Bengal in place of Shaista Khan with the commission of recovering Guwahati[47] who arrived in Bengal in the year 1677 A.D. On the other hand, the Assamese rulers were always in fear of a new attack from the part of the Mughals and were having vigilance towards the front. But the Barphukan played a dubious rule who was busy to overthrow the Burhagohain. He had planned a conspiracy with the Mughals on condition that Guwahati would be surrendered to Mughals if the Barphukan was made the king of Assam with Mughal army to eliminate Burhagohain. The secret offer of bloodless surrender of Guwahati and lower Assam was forwarded by Monsur Khan with his recommendation to Dacca which was accepted by the viceroy.

Dacca prepared for war and the viceroy ordered the experienced thanader of Rangamati, Monsur Khan to lead an expedition and occupy Guwahati. Monsur Khan advanced cautiously with some of his high officials. Monsur Khan afraid of the Ahoms snare hesitated to enter the war zone of Guwahati and was halting at Agiathuti. He was assured of safety by Barphukan

through his agents. Accordingly Guwahati was evacuated by the Ahom army by proceeding upstream. Three days after, the Mughal occupied the evacuated forte in Feb’ 1679 A.D. and thus Guwahati came under the control of the Mughals after twelve years. \(^{48}\) This was the last Muslim expedition to Assam and henceforth no Muslim invasion done in this land till date. But the Mughal had to evacuate Guwahati in a short space of time later.

After eight years of chaos and disturbances in the Ahom royal order, Gadapani or Gadadhar Singh was installed in the throne of the Ahom dynasty. Gadapani soon after becoming the king decided to attack Guwahati and to drive the Mughals out of Assam. The Mughal centre at Delhi was busy otherwise and their fauzder in Guwahati Monsur Khan had fallen ill. So the Ahom under Chetia Barphukan attacked the Mughal forte and occupied Guwahati in the year 1682 A.D. \(^ {49}\) and had driven them out of the river Manah.

The long protracted Ahom-Mughal contest for Kamrup ended with the victory of Assam by the Ahoms. It was as Gait held ‘the last Mohammedan war’. \(^ {50}\) It was a great moral triumph for a small state to have a victory over the vast and apparently powerful Mughal Empire. \(^ {51}\)

\(^{48}\) Barpujari, Dr. H.K., The Comprehensive History of Assam, Guwahati 2007, page 245.

\(^ {49}\) Ibid, page 254.

\(^ {50}\) Ibid page 205.

\(^ {51}\) Ibid page 256.
(e) Effects of these Muslim invasions in the society and culture of Assamese people.

One of the multiple results of these Muslim invasions towards Assam is the production of some Persian chronicles on history of Assam which serve as an authentic and accurate primary and secondary source to the students of history. These chronicles supply not only the details of political or military history, but also important facts of physical and economic geography as well as social and cultural history of this area and also help in fixing the chronology of their rulers. Here is a brief about Persian chronicles with their short descriptions produced during Muslim invasions in Assam.

1) Tabqat-e- Nasiri ; This work is a good historical and literary achievement and is an important contemporary source on history of Assam. The accounts of the first three Mohammedan invasions of Assam are available here. The author Minhajuddin Siraj, a judge, narrates his facts in plain and straightforward manner which induces confidence in sincerity of his statements and accuracy of knowledge. It has been popular and held in high esteem in India and Europe in all subsequent ages. All the later historians have borrowed profusely from it. ‘Dowson’ is of the opinion that probably no other book has been so largely quoted by Orientalists as this one.52

2) Tarikh-e Firozshahi: A Persian chronicle on history with a touch of Assam's history written by Ziauddin Barani.

3) Tarikh-e-Ferishta: Gulshan-e-Ibrahim: A Persian Historical chronicle by Mohammed Qasim.

4) Akbar nameh: A Persian chronicle written by the first royal historiographer of the Mughal court Shaikh Abul Fazl who throws light on the beginnings of an aggressive Mughal North-East Frontier policy, the breakup of the Koch kingdom, the events of Koch-Mughal war especially the imprisonment of Raja Parikshit and Mukarram Khans expedition to Assam.

5) Munatkhab-ut-Tawarikh: A Persian chronicle written by Abdul Qadir Badauni. In this book the author describes the city of Lakhnawati and discusses the political relations of Bengal sultan with the Mughals with some light on contact between Assam and the Mughals in a subjective way.

6) Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri: An autobiography of the emperor Jahangir refers to hostility between Laksimi Narayan, King of the Koch and Parikshit, the king of Kamrup.

7) Baharistan-e-Ghaibi: A Persian chronicle written by Alauddin Isphahani alias Mirza Nathan Ghaibi, is primarily a memoirs and only secondarily a history. Nathan himself was an important officer in Mughal Kamrup and an eye witness active participant in contemporary political affairs. It contains a detailed reference to administrative, military and social history of Assam.\(^\text{53}\)

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\(^\text{53}\) Barpujari, Dr. H. K., The Comprehensive History of Assam, Guwahati, 2007 page 11.
8) Padshahnamae: The official history of the first two decades of Shahjahan reign by Abdul Hamid Lahori, is a sole Persian source which illuminates Assam-Mughal policy and the accounts of their hostilities in details.

9) Alamgir Name: A Persian chronicle written by Mirza Mohammed Kazim, is the official history of the first decade of the reign of Alamgir. It refers to the defeat of Assamese by Alauddin Hussain Shah of Bengal, the inclusion of Guwahati within the Mughal territory.

10) Futuhat-e-Alamgiri: A Persian chronicle by Iswardas, a Nagor Brahmin of Gujrat, is an account of Aurangzeb's reign till 34th year. It contains references to the rulers of Assam.

11) Fathe-Ibriya: An important Persian chronicle also known as Tarikh-e-Molk-e-Asham or Tarikh-e-Asham by Ibn Mohammed Wali Ahmed better known as Shehabuddin Talish, the Waqea Newis of Mir Jumla. It contains the story of Mir Jumla’s conquest of Koch Bihar and Assam till his death and return of his victorious army. As Talish accompanied the Mir, his account is that of eye-witness and admittedly the most authentic one from the Mughal standpoint. It is a wholly contemporary account of great value. The description of the inception, the progress and the victorious march, the tragic end and the retreat of the army is throughout vivid. The treatment is more systematic and more detailed than the official history. Political and military history apart, this book sheds lurid light on Assam and its peoples in the late half of the seventeenth century.

12) Ma’asir-e-Alamgiri: It is an official history of Aurangzeb’s entire reign collected from the state paper after his death during the reign of Mohammed Shah. It contains records of post Mir Jumla for two decades of Assam.

13) Zafarnama-e-Alamgiri: It is known as Aurangnameh, Waqiat or Halat-i-Alamgiri by Mirza Askari whose original name was Aqil khan Razi. Though this work is on history of first five years of Aurangzeb’s reign, but its treatment of Assam is very brief, referring only to some defensive preparations of the Assamese and a few events.

14) Riaz-uz-Salatin: The latest Persian chronicle by Munshi Gulam Hussain Salim is a sole history of Bengal and Bihar during Muslim rule. It is practically a modern work based on adequate source, refers to the first three Muslim invasion of Kamrup and indicates the effects of the war of succession among Shahjahan’s sons on the north eastern frontier policy of the Mughals.

Apart of the above mentioned works on history and culture of Assam, there are many other works in these matters written in Persian not mentioned here.

One of the conspicuous results of the approximately four hundred and seventy five years of war between the Muslim power of India and the rulers of Assam is the gradual growth of the Muslim Population in the country. It started mainly through slow infiltration and large

scale migration into Kamrup and Goalpara district at different times during this period. It is, of course, true that conversion to Islam in Assam began with adoption of this faith by a native chieftain from Mohammed bin Bakhtiar as early as 1206 A.D. But no evidence of large scale conversion except some rare cases was found in later time among the people of Assam. Of course, it is possible that people of different vocation including Muslim traders and travelers from Bengal should enter and settle, at least in Koch Bihar and Kamrup region of Assam. It was actually during the period of Muslim occupation of the Kamrup and Goalpara region and particularly after the creation of the colony of the Afgan warriors in Hajo by Hussain Shah that a considerable number of Muslims could find an opportunity for the first time to settle in Kamrup and Goalpara district permanently. Even after the Ahoms had recovered the entire territory of western Kamrup up to the river Karatoya, a substantial section of those Muslim settlers in these two districts appears to have stayed there in harmony with the indigenous people and composed the growth of Muslim population in the country. During the age of the Ahom-Mughal relation which started in 1613 A.D. Hajo and Guwahati became important centre for military, civil, commercial and cultural activities of the Muslims in north eastern India after the annexation of Koch Hajo to the Mughal empire. It, therefore, seems possible that large number of Muslims of different vocations should freely move to this region and settle there permanently from that time.

The repeated clashes of arms with Mughal made it necessary for Ahom to require the services of the war-captive Muslims for their own purpose to procure essential information of other side. They even imported many Muslim artisans whenever necessary like masons,

engravers, spinners and in state arsenals. A large scale settlement of Muslims in Assam might have happened during the Mughal governor of Koch Hajo, Mukarram Khan. The next large scale Muslim settlement occurred when Laluk Barphukan surrendered Kamrup to Mughal in order to become an independent king of Assam. The Muslim population in Assam grew in such an extent that the census of 1872 A.D. shows the total number of Muslim population in Assam were 178,109.

The other important effect of these Muslim invasions in Assam was the introduction of Muslim land revenue system in this country. Sultan Hussain Shah of Gauda who exercised the total control over the entire western part of Assam up to Koch-Hajo from 1502 A.D. to 1519 A.D., first introduced the system of Muslim land revenue administration in this country replacing the Bhuyan or feudal lords system.

The land revenue administration under the Muslim system was conducted through a distinct department of which the provincial head was known as Dewan. A province was divided in successive way as Sarkars, Parganas, Taluks and Dastures etc. The land under people use were categorized as Khiraj, Bi-khiraj and La-khiraj. After Hussain Shah, this system had got its passage through Assam as Sher Shah and the emperor Akbar had introduced this system with moderate manner in Indian land administrations which reached to Assam. The Ahom King Pratap Singh introduced this Muslim System of land revenue in Assam which brought about a revolutionary change in the age-old land revenue system of the country and strengthened the economic condition of its people.\(^{57}\)

\(^{57}\) Saikia, Dr. Mohini Kumar- Assam Muslim relation and its cultural significance, Luit press, Golaghat, page 230.
The most important effect that Muslim invasions in Assam could leave a distinct trace on the society and culture of Assamese people is their influence on its language, literature and culture. Assamese language has directly evolved from Eastern Apabhramsha of Prakrit and has a direct link with Sanskrit, the matrix of all Indian language. Assamese literature has gained its importance under the patronage of the Kamata King, Durlavnaryan in the thirteenth century A.D. During the Muslim invasions in Assam Persian has got its influxes in Assamese language and influenced its vocabulary. So the gradual rise of Arabic and Persian words in Assamese language is, in fact, another noteworthy and tangible effect of age-old contact of Assam with Muslims. The main factors which appear to have played a dominant role in promoting the growth of such elements in the language are :

(a) The rise of Muslim populations in Assam,

(b) Wars and diplomatic relation of the Assamese Kings with the Mohammedan powers

(c) Creation of religious songs like Zikir and Zaris by the Assamese Muslims

(d) Travels of pilgrims from Assam to the northern India and

(e) Cultural exchanges of the Ahom kings with rest of India.

With the foundation of Powa Mecca and other Dargahs in different region of Assam as centre of propagation of Islam in the early fourteenth century, some Arabic and Persian words have come to be used in the country. Though they seem to have remained confined among the
Muslims in early stages, but they have come in the use of common dialects prevailing among the Assamese people as a whole in later ages.

'It seems to be doubtful if the early Muslim settlers in Assam could bring a rich treasure of Islamic Literature with them, because most of them were mainly warriors, traders and artisans who were either taken in as prisoners or came to stay in the country in different political circumstances. So, the wide culture of Islamic literature in Assam by them appears to be improbable. The most outstanding and sustaining contribution of the Assamese Muslims to the popular literature of Assam are the Zikirs and Zaris which have the distinct influence of Persian in their language and meaning. A Zikir is a religious and philosophical poem centering a point of faith or of philosophy. In several of the songs of this variety a story centering around the life of Azan Pir or Shāh Miran to whom these songs are ascribed, is told. A Zari is elegiac in character and content and may be called a form of marshiya, and generally relates itself to the tragic tales of Karbala. Some of the Assamese Zaris may be called independent ballads giving the stories of Haider Ghazi. These composition particularly the Zaris, in their subject-matter resemble the Bargit or devotional songs of Sankardev or Madhavdev. The chief objectives of the Zikirs appears to be the reorganization of the society of Assamese Muslims, by generating their faith and love for Islam in such a way that there will be no discord in their old-age relation with


Assamese Hindu society. These Zikirs depict the motivation of the Pirs who used to chant them glorifying Allah and Islam in a high lyrical vein. Through the Assamese Zikirs and Zaris which were composed in the 17th century, many Persian and Arabic words pertaining to Islamic faith and rituals entered the Assamese language and enriched its literature. The naturalized words of this kind, as understood by Hindus also, however, not many, but Muslim people of Assam generally employ a large number of such Arabic and Persian words connected with their Islamic faith and rituals.

Effects and influences of Persian Muslim invasions to Assam, apart from the above, are manifold. The Muslim saints and Pirs appeared in Assam in nock and corner of the country and hence various Khanqahs, Dargahs, Mazars, Maqams, Mosques are established in their respective places which need no mention. These have far reaching cultural effects on the Assamese people and society still date as both Hindus and Muslims go there for the hope of their peace and prosperity.

In a word, the Muslim invasions in Assam have distinct effects over its agricultural customs, food and diet, dress and ornaments, household utensils, keeping of children’s name, customs and manner, folk songs, painting, music and so on.

60. Saikia, Dr. Mohini Kumar- Assam Muslim relation and its cultural significance, Luit press, Golaghat, page 265.

The Barak Valley Region with its River Systems